

The Commoner

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VOL. 15, NO. 11

Lincoln, Nebraska, November, 1915

Whole Number 679

INVESTIGATE

INVESTIGATE the activities of the business group pecuniarily interested in increased appropriations for army and navy, which has become so active in pushing its selfish demands. Congress ought to at once appoint a committee to investigate. It is more than a lobby. It is a concerted attempt to misinform the whole nation with a view to the securing of enormous profits at the expense of the tax payers. Publicity is the surest weapon with which to meet an evil of this kind. Let the people once know the real motive back of this movement for preparedness and it can not succeed. Exposure will kill it. **TURN ON THE LIGHT** and let the country see the fraudulent character of the pretended patriotism which is now being paraded before the country by men who claim a superior attachment to the nation, but are in fact nothing but leeches and parasites. **THE INVESTIGATION OUGHT TO COMMENCE AT ONCE.**

W. J. BRYAN.

ANOTHER "INSIDIOUS" LOBBY

In 1913, soon after taking office, President Wilson electrified the country and started a stampede out of Washington, when he charged that the capital was infested by an "insidious lobby" which he was determined to smoke out. The hegra which followed this presidential warning left Washington hotel men to mourn the good old times. There was never before such a hustling to get out of the City of Magnificent Distances.

But the "insidious lobby" of 1913 was a negligible force in comparison with the more insidious lobby which now infests the capital. The lobby which challenged presidential attention in 1913 and which fled before the scourge which the White house brought into view was frankly selfish. It made few if any pretensions of patriotism. It was not saving the country. It was not buttressing our shores against a threatened invasion. It was not particularly anxious about the flag. It was troubling itself little with the Yellow Peril or the German bogey. It was there merely to get all that was to be had for the railroads, for steel, for sugar, for glass, for ship yards, for powder mills, for gun factories, for lumber and for all the other pets of privilege which republicanism had been nurturing for so many years.

The word from the White house gave this lobby a great shock and occasioned unconcealed alarm in many quarters, but it was highly effective. The hotel business in Washington was never so poor as it was in 1913 and 1914. But it must be improving now. For there is another and an infinitely more dangerous lobby infesting the capital of the nation today. It is a purely "patriotic" lobby, a lobby which has wrapped the flag about it, a lobby profoundly concerned over the welfare of the nation and the perpetuity of our sacred institutions, a lobby which is in deadly fear of some imaginary foe, a lobby that thinks in terms of air ships, submarines, dreadnaughts, 16-inch guns, torpedoes, shells, a

huge standing army and a navy greater than a Hobson ever dared to propose.

Even the railroads when carrying forward their successful campaign to force the government to permit an increase of freight rates, flooded the mails with no such a deluge of literature as that which the Preparedness lobby is today disseminating. Never before in the history of the country has an equal activity in any behalf been witnessed. Evidently this lobby is richly endowed. It is magnificently organized. It is splendidly equipped. And it is carrying forward its work with a thoroughness and with an indifference to the cost which may well challenge the curious interest of the American people who are being asked to approve of vast expenditures on the "national defenses," the implication being that our shores are menaced by some powerful oppressor.

The ramifications of this lobby are widespread. Scores of leagues, societies, clubs and associations have been formed to push particular phases of the general campaign. There are na-

tional security leagues, national rifle associations, national aereo clubs and national organizations of various sorts designed to arouse the country to some impending peril and to bring it to a realizing sense of what is expected of it in the way of funds for buying battleships, cruisers, dreadnaughts, submarines, destroyers, aircraft, powder, war material and equipment and for the increase of army and navy to a war footing in a time of profound peace. Schools, churches, political organizations, the magazine and newspaper press, chautauquas, the lyceum, everything which contributes to the molding of public opinion, is being utilized by this lobby as far as possible in spreading the gospel of preparedness and in dragooning popular sentiment into an acceptance of the fantastic notion that preparation for war is a guaranty of peace.

The President might well turn his attention to this lobby. The one driven by him from Washington two years ago was praiseworthy by comparison. There was little false pretense in that "insidious" aggregation which haunted the halls of congress and besieged the departments of government in pursuit of favors. But the lobby of which the Army and Navy league, the National Security league, the National Rifle association, the Aereo Club of America and scores of similar organizations are the visible expressions, is of the very essence of false pretense. It is greed masquerading in the vestments of patriotism. It is militarism cloaked in the garb of peace. It is selfish ambition posing as disinterested public spirit. It is imperialism of the sordid sort whose democratic habiliments do not conceal the iron hand or the two-edged sword. That it should indefinitely pursue its sinister work unchallenged seems unthinkable. The President and congress should both call it to account and force a revelation of the secret springs of action and the secret sources of supply. And the country will be much disappointed should the President and congress fail to turn on the light.

WARREN WORTH BAILEY,

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